

(Ft. Lauderdale, FL) Tonight, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following statement on the Senate's passage of legislation to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell, the 1993 law that bans open service by gay and lesbian Americans in the military:

"The activists for tolerance living and dead are united today in a long awaited and overdue celebration.

"I am truly elated that we have taken one more intolerable policy of intolerance off the political table.

"I would be terribly remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank the countless individuals who have worked tirelessly on behalf of this cause. Today, the United States reaffirms its commitment to honor, integrity, and equality for all.

"Now, the Army model can become the mantra of all persons' service to this great country, 'be all that you can be.' God bless America," said Hastings.

Hastings has been a leader in the fight to repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' having introduced an amendment to ban the use of defense appropriations funds to investigate and discharge service members for telling their sexual orientation and legislation that would protect active-duty service members, regardless of their sexual orientation, who openly testify in Congressional hearings by expanding current whistleblower protections between members of the Armed Forces and Members of Congress.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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